

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Willa Cather Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting understanding and appreciation of the life, time, settings, and work of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Willa Cather. The Foundation was begun in 1955 as the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial, through the efforts of a small group of volunteers in Red Cloud, Nebraska, led by Mildred R. Bennett. Today the Foundation is directed by a thirty-member Board of Governors that includes nationally recognized scholars, teachers, and business and professional people from throughout the United States.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS

- Scholarships and educational workshops
- Literary conferences and festivals
- Arts programming at the beautifully restored Red Cloud Opera House and Gallery
- Preservation of properties and archives
- Restoration of the Willa Cather Memorial Prairie
- Publication of the *Willa Cather Newsletter & Review*, an important contribution to Cather scholarship
- Tours of historic buildings and sites in Red Cloud and the surrounding countryside

Your membership aids not just the literary and historical initiatives of the Willa Cather Foundation, but also the town of Red Cloud itself, a lively and artistic rural community that strongly supports the mission of the Willa Cather Foundation. The viability of this town is crucial in sustaining the efforts and success of the Willa Cather Foundation.

JOIN THE FOUNDATION

For more information about membership call the Willa Cather Foundation office at 866.731.7304 or visit [www.WillaCather.org](http://www.WillaCather.org). Memberships begin as low as \$50.



WILLACATHER.ORG

Fans and scholars of Willa Cather are passionate about the author, her life, and the prairie landscape that inspired her. The online community created to celebrate the life and work of Cather is relevant and meaningful, whether the visitor is a high school student or international scholar. With its archives, store, forums, and virtual galleries, [www.WillaCather.org](http://www.WillaCather.org) is a literary hive that delivers meaningful content and fuels connection among devoted readers around the world.

THE LIFE OF WILLA CATHER

The eldest of seven children, Willa Cather was born in Back Creek Valley, Virginia in 1873. When Cather was nine years old, her family moved to rural Webster County, Nebraska. After a year and a half, the family resettled in the county seat of Red Cloud, where Cather lived until beginning her college studies at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln in 1890.



After her graduation in 1895, Cather worked as a journalist and teacher, living first in Pittsburgh and later in New York City. Her first volume of poetry, *April Twilights*, was published by a vanity press in 1903, and in 1912 she was able to leave editorial work and live as a full-time writer and poet. Over the next several decades, Cather wrote prolifically; her later works include *Alexander's Bridge* (1912), *O Pioneers!* (1913), *My Antonia* (1918), and *A Lost Lady* (1923), all of which explored the pioneering experience on the Plains. In

1923, *One of Ours* (1922) received the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Her other well regarded works include *The Professor's House* (1925), *My Mortal Enemy* (1926), *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927), *Shadows on the Rock* (1931), *Lucy Gayheart* (1935), and *Sapphira and the Slave Girl* (1940).

As one of the greatest American novelists of the 20th century, Cather was gifted in conveying an intimate understanding of her characters in relation to their personal and cultural environments—environments that often derived from Red Cloud. Cather died from a cerebral hemorrhage on April 24, 1947 and was buried in the Old Burying Ground in Jaffrey Center, New Hampshire. Engraved on her tombstone is this quotation from *My Ántonia*: “that is happiness; to be dissolved into something complete and great.” Complex and brilliant, Cather lives on through her many devoted readers.



- WILLA CATHER 1873-1947**
- Novels**
- *Alexander's Bridge* 1912
  - *O Pioneers!* 1913
  - *The Song of the Lark* 1915
  - *My Antonia* 1918
  - *One of Ours* 1922
  - *A Lost Lady* 1923
  - *The Professor's House* 1925
  - *My Mortal Enemy* 1926
  - *Death Comes for the Archbishop* 1927
  - *Shadows on the Rock* 1931
  - *Lucy Gayheart* 1935
  - *Sapphira and the Slave Girl* 1940

- Short Story Collections**
- *The Troll Garden* 1905
  - *Youth and the Bright Medusa* 1920
  - *Obscure Destinies* 1932
  - *The Old Beauty and Others* 1948
- Poetry**
- *April Twilights* 1903
- Essays and Collected Writings**
- *Not Under Forty* 1936
  - *Willa Cather On Writing* 1949
  - *Willa Cather in Europe* 1956

**THE WILLA CATHER FOUNDATION**

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*Willa Cather*





## ABOUT THE OPERA HOUSE

Built in 1885, the Red Cloud Opera House figured prominently in the life of author Willa Cather. The Opera House facility is now home to the Willa Cather Foundation offices, gallery, bookstore, and auditorium. For tickets or a schedule of events call 402.746.2641 or go to [www.WillaCather.org](http://www.WillaCather.org).



The newly restored Red Cloud Opera House auditorium transports visitors back in time to set the mood, scene, and tone of the 1880s, when Willa Cather and her friends eagerly anticipated the arrival of traveling productions such as *The Bohemian Girl* and *The Mikado*. As Cather herself put it, “Only real people speaking the lines can give us that feeling of living along with them, of participating in their existence.”

Today, the Red Cloud Opera House hosts numerous performances each year. The diverse schedule consists of theatrical plays, concerts, humanities presentations, gallery exhibits, and much more. From professional entertainers to community theatre, the Opera House has something for everyone.

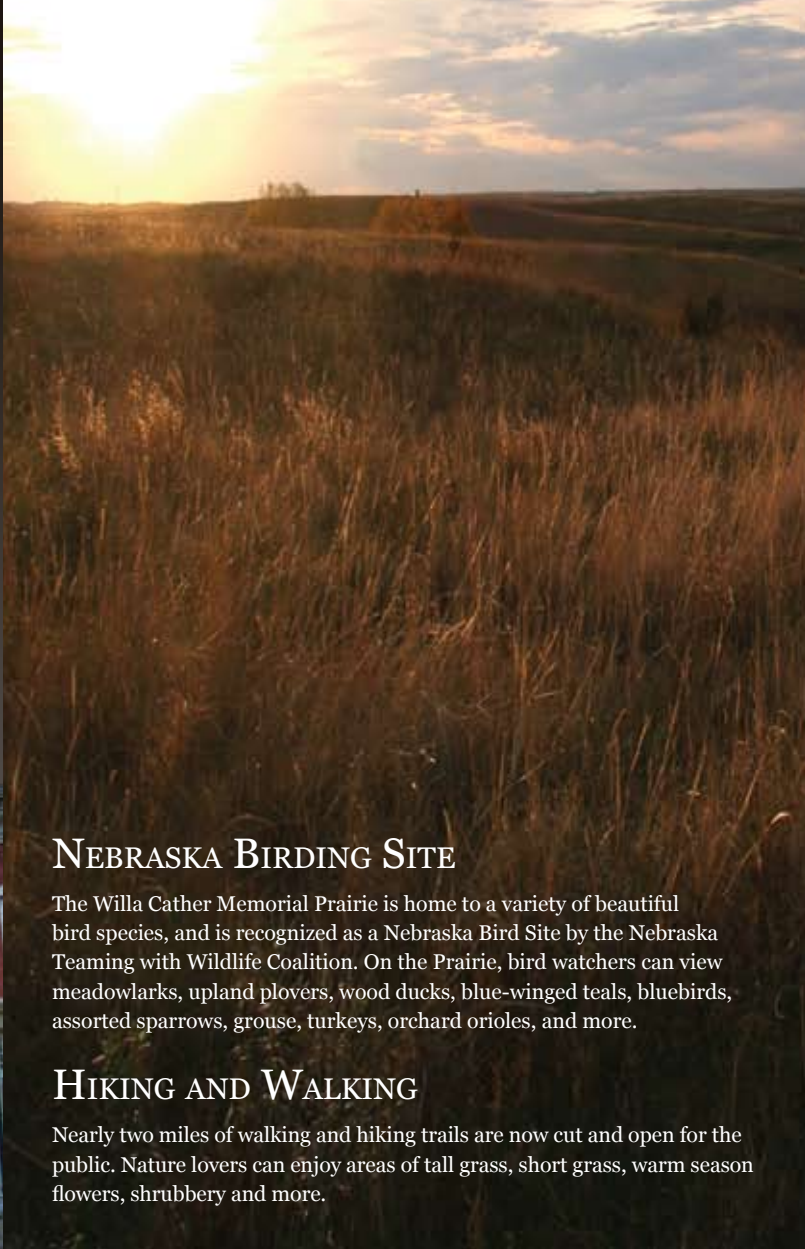


## WILLA CATHER MEMORIAL PRAIRIE

Five miles south of Red Cloud, the Willa Cather Memorial Prairie is a botanical treasure consisting of 608 acres of never-been-plowed native prairie. The Willa Cather Foundation is returning this land to its pre-1900 conditions, a time before overgrazing and the encroachment of man and foreign plant species.

We have estimated that a minimum of 250 plant species exist on the Prairie, including the rare Fremont’s evening primrose and Fendler’s aster—both candidates for “threatened” status by the Nebraska Natural Heritage Program. The area is classified as loess, mixed-grass prairie, and is unique in that it brings together species at the southern edge of their range with those at the northern edge of their range. The transitional location of the Prairie makes it home to several species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates. Two rare species that exist on the land include the Great Plains narrowmouth toad and smooth green snake.

The importance of the prairie in shaping America’s art, history, and culture has been lost to much of the world. Of the millions of acres of grasslands that once covered the continent, only a small percentage still remains.



## NEBRASKA BIRDING SITE

The Willa Cather Memorial Prairie is home to a variety of beautiful bird species, and is recognized as a Nebraska Bird Site by the Nebraska Teaming with Wildlife Coalition. On the Prairie, bird watchers can view meadowlarks, upland plovers, wood ducks, blue-winged teals, bluebirds, assorted sparrows, grouse, turkeys, orchard orioles, and more.

## HIKING AND WALKING

Nearly two miles of walking and hiking trails are now cut and open for the public. Nature lovers can enjoy areas of tall grass, short grass, warm season flowers, shrubbery and more.



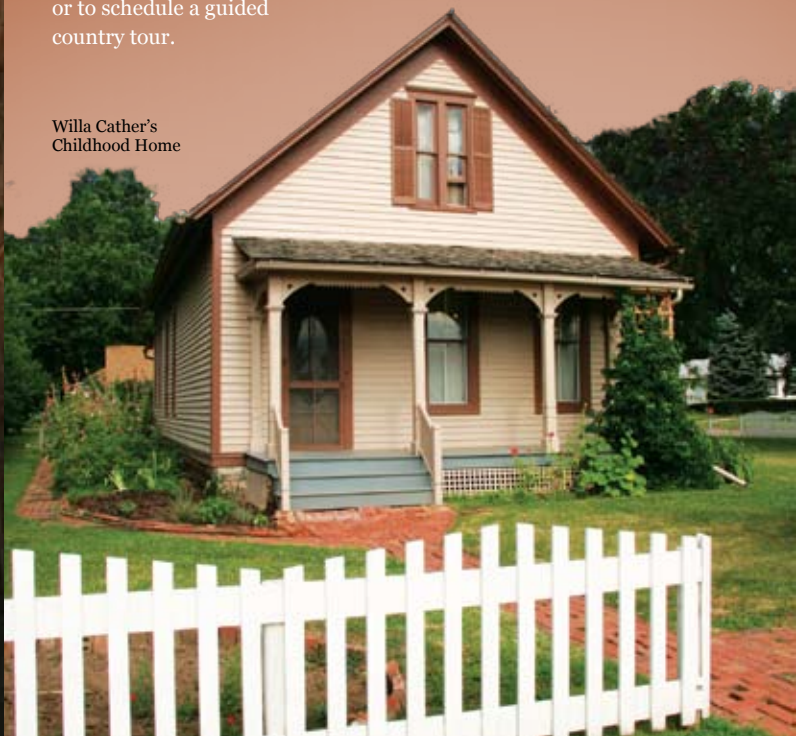
## CATHER TOURS

The Willa Cather Foundation proudly hosts town and country tours where visitors can view the childhood home of Willa Cather as well as experience other historic buildings related to her life and writing.

Town tours are available daily and country tours are available by appointment. Visitors can choose between a 3-building town tour (lasting about 45 minutes) and a 7-building town tour (lasting about 90 minutes). The country tour highlights 21 historic sites and covers approximately 60 miles of the surrounding countryside. Visitors may schedule a guided tour of the country sites by contacting the Willa Cather Foundation, or purchase a detailed map for a self-guided experience. Virtual tours are available online at [www.WillaCather.org](http://www.WillaCather.org).

Tours leave from the Cather Bookstore, located in the historic Red Cloud Opera House in downtown Red Cloud. Please call 866.731.7304 for more information or to schedule a guided country tour.

Willa Cather’s Childhood Home



## CATHER BOOKSTORE

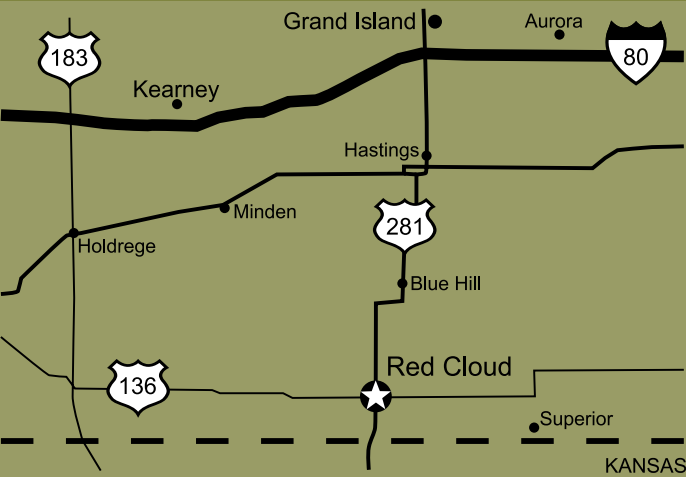
Visit the Willa Cather Foundation Bookstore in Red Cloud or online at [www.WillaCather.org](http://www.WillaCather.org). Choose from the largest selection of Willa Cather books in the world or browse our unique Willa Cather and Red Cloud Opera House gift items.



## AREA ATTRACTIONS

- Red Cloud Opera House\*
- Auld Public Library
- The Moon Block
- Farmers’ and Merchants’ Bank\*
- Webster County Museum
- Cather’s Childhood Home\*
- The Harling House\*
- Starke Round Barn
- Burlington Depot\*
- St. Juliana Falconieri Church\*
- Baptist Church
- Sweetwater Glassworks Art Gallery
- Second Cather Home
- Webster County Courthouse
- Grace Episcopal Church\*
- Willa Cather Memorial Prairie
- Red Cloud Golf Course

\* denotes sites on the Cather Tour



## ACCOMMODATIONS & LODGING

Red Cloud, Nebraska, is said to be the most famous little town in America, and those of us at the Willa Cather Foundation know that this is true. The Red Cloud Opera House and Willa Cather Foundation sees nearly 10,000 visitors from all over the world pass through its doors each year. Those visitors need places to stay, and our little town has a number of quaint options.

- Cather’s Retreat Bed And Breakfast
- McFarland Hotel
- Green Acres Motel And RV Park
- Bell’s Sleepy Valley Mobile Home And RV Court

For additional information about the town of Red Cloud and its many attractions, please visit [www.RedCloudGuideRock.com](http://www.RedCloudGuideRock.com).